(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Government permits export of iron-ore with iron content upto 64% without canalization. While export of iron-ore with more than 64% iron content is canalized through MMTC Ltd., Government permits export of iron-ore fines with more than 64% iron content against licence by private mine owners/leaseholders.

(b) to (d) The existing iron-ore export policy regulates and promotes judicious use of iron-ore for domestic purpose and export of surplus quantity. Even after exporting iron ore surplus after meeting domestic demand there are still surpluse is left.

Production of iron ore is in excess of current domestic demand. The surplus iron-ore fines, produced during mining as well as sizing and, calibrating of lumpy-ore is being evacuated through exports as there is less demand for it from the domestic steel industry.

Progress of negotiations with ASEAN over FTA

2303. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement with the ASEAN;

(b) whether any amicable solution has been reached over differences with the ASEAN on the tariff on palm oil; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Negotiations for India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) are currently in progress on different parts of the proposed Agreement, including on Trade in Goods, Trade in services and Investments etc.

(b) and (c) India has offered a gradual reduction of tariff on Crude Palm Oil (CPO) to 50% level by 2018 and on Refined Palm Oil (RPO) to 60% level by 2018. The offer is under negotiation.

Export of iron-ore

2304. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering a proposal to allow the export of iron-ore;

(b) if so, whether this proposal has taken care of the requirements of indigenous industries needs including that of PSUs;